

Lower San Pedro River

IBA web pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.audubon.org/important-bird-areas/lower-san-pedro-river • http://aziba.org/?page_id=461 • AzGFD Conservation Opportunity Area
Priority	Global
Qualifying Criteria	<p>Global Site Important to Special Status Avian Species (Bell’s Vireo)</p> <p>Continental Site Important to Special Status Avian Species (Abert’s Towhee)</p> <p>State Site Important to Special Status Avian Species (Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Gray Hawk, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Bell’s Vireo, Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet, Lucy’s Warbler, Abert’s Towhee, Brewer’s Sparrow)</p> <p>Rare, Unique, or Exceptional Representative Habitat/Ecological Community (low-elevation riparian)</p> <p>Significant Concentrations of Birds >1% of breeding population (Southwestern Willow Flycatcher (>40% Arizona breeding population), Mississippi Kite (>40% Arizona breeding population), Gray Hawk (>30% Arizona breeding population))</p> <p>Significant numbers, density, and/or diversity of landbirds (Yellow Warbler, Bell’s Vireo)</p> <p>Bar Charts - eBird</p>
IBA Polygon Center Point (Latitude, Longitude)	-110.390000, 32.440000
Size	32,692 acres
County	Pinal, Pima, Cochise
Local Communities	Cascabel, San Manuel, Oracle, Mammoth, Dudleyville, Winkleman
Description	The IBA begins at the southern boundary of 3 Links Farm in Cochise County and follows the San Pedro river downstream (the San Pedro flows from south to north) to the confluence with the Gila River at the town of Winkleman. The majority of the land is privately owned and only select properties in public ownership or under conservation easement and management are specifically included in the IBA. The Lower San Pedro River from the Narrows north of the community of Cascabel to the Gila River confluence is surrounded by saguaro

	cactus-dominated Sonoran desertscrub. The river itself supports well-developed cottonwood-willow gallery forest and the largest intact mesquite bosque community in Arizona.
Mission/Goals	Conservation of an exceptional example of low-elevation desert riparian habitat and the breeding and migratory birds that depend on it.
Current Habitat Conservation, Planning, and Management Activities	Conservation easements are managed to enhance riparian habitat through fencing, protection from trespass livestock grazing and wood cutters, reclamation of abandoned mine tailings, protection from off-road vehicle use, and retirement of agriculture and associated wells. The TNC San Pedro Preserve, a former fish farm with two ponds, is managed for marshbird habitat.
Land Cover Type ¹ (%) and Associated Priority ² Birds ¹ Southwest Regional Gap Analysis modified to align with ABBA/SWAP habitat types ² AGFD SGCN and IBA Qualifying Species	<p>38.78 Riparian (<i>Bell's Vireo, Abert's Towhee, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Gray Hawk, Yellow Warbler, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Yellow Warbler, Lucy's Warbler, Gila Woodpecker, Purple Martin, Thick-billed Kingbird, Gould's Turkey</i>)</p> <p>17.40 Sonoran Desertscrub: Uplands (<i>Gilded Flicker, Gila Woodpecker, Purple Martin</i>)</p> <p>16.00 Chihuahuan Desertscrub (<i>Gila Woodpecker</i>)</p> <p>12.70 Semiarid/Sonoran Savannah Grassland (<i>Mississippi Kite, Gila Woodpecker, Botteri's Sparrow, Rufous-winged Sparrow, Lark Bunting</i>)</p> <p>10.03 Agriculture (<i>Mississippi Kite</i>)</p> <p>2.89 Wash (<i>Bell's Vireo, Abert's Towhee, Gila Woodpecker</i>)</p> <p>1.85 Mesquite (<i>Bell's Vireo, Abert's Towhee, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Lucy's Warbler, Gila Woodpecker, Gould's Turkey</i>)</p> <p>0.34 Other (Urban/Residential, Pinyon Pine-Juniper Woodland, Rock, Sonoran Desertscrub: Lower Colorado River)</p>
Related Habitat Accounts*	Lowland Riparian Sonoran Desert Low Grasslands
Biological Description	<p>The San Pedro River serves as a corridor between the Sky Islands of the Madrean Archipelago in northern Sonora and southern Arizona in its southernmost reaches and, in the north, Arizona's Central Highlands. The river represents a ribbon of water and riparian vegetation in an otherwise arid environment. The river exhibits a remarkably high biodiversity, both in resident and migratory species.</p> <p>Saguaro, foothill and blue palo verde, ocotillo, and a variety of cacti</p>

	<p>and small shrubs cover the uplands in the northern portion of the IBA. Mesquite, catclaw acacia, burrobrush, and desert broom line xeric washes while Goodding’s willow, Fremont cottonwood, velvet ash, and netleaf hackberry cluster along wetter drainage ways. Interspersions of Sonoran desert grassland are typified by gramma grasses, Three-awns, and Muhlenbergia species.</p>
<p>Focal Bird Species</p> <p>Bold Type are Road to Recovery species</p>	<p><u>AGFD Species of Greatest Conservation Need</u></p> <p>Tier 1 – Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher</p> <p>Tier 2 – Abert’s Towhee, American Kestrel, Black-throated Sparrow, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Brewer’s Sparrow, Broad-billed Hummingbird, Bullock’s Oriole, Canyon Towhee, Chihuahuan Raven, Common Black Hawk, Common Nighthawk, Desert Purple Martin, Gilded Flicker, Gila Woodpecker, Hooded Oriole, Inca Dove, Killdeer, Lark Bunting, Lincoln’s Sparrow, Loggerhead Shrike, Mississippi Kite, Northern Beardless Tyrannulet, Pacific Wren, Pyrrhuloxia, Red-winged Blackbird, Rufous-winged Sparrow, Scott’s Oriole, Swainson’s Hawk, Swainson’s Thrush, Thick-billed Kingbird, Verdin, Vesper Sparrow, Western Wood-Pewee, Western Screech Owl,</p> <p><u>Federal Threatened or Endangered Species</u></p> <p>Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher</p> <p><u>USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern</u></p> <p>National: Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Elf Owl, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Bell’s Vireo, Lucy’s Warbler, Rufous-winged Sparrow</p> <p>USFWS Region: Common Black Hawk, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Elf Owl, Gilded Flicker, Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet, Bell’s Vireo, Lucy’s Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Rufous-winged Sparrow, Botteri’s Sparrow</p>
<p>NABCI Bird Conservation Region</p>	<p>34: Sierra Madre Occidental</p>
<p>Ownership</p>	<p>Ownership of this site is shared between the Arizona Game and Fish Department, BLM, Bureau of Reclamation, Salt River Project, The Nature Conservancy, Pima County and private owners.</p>
<p>Conservation Land Status*</p>	<p>Three Links Farm: Consists of 2,156 acres that lie along the San Pedro River. It was purchased by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) as part of their long-standing program to protect the San Pedro River and its riparian habitat.</p> <p>Spirit Hollow: Is one mile south of Manuel Crossing, a small parcel</p>

	<p>(160 acres) in Township 9 South and Range 18 East; Southeast Quarter of Section 31 and Township 10 South and Range 18 East, Southwest Quarter of the Northwest Quarter Section 6. This property was acquired by Salt River Project (SRP) for Southwestern Willow Flycatcher and Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo. 7B Ranch: Is located east of the town of Mammoth. The 3,200 acre property covers 7 river miles and is owned by Resolution Copper Company and is being offered in a land exchange with the federal government for conservation purposes.</p> <p>Aravaipa Crossing: This site has high densities of southwestern willow flycatcher habitat. The Triangle Bar property was privately owned by ASARCO and has been transfer to the U.S. government and is managed by the Arizona Game and Fish Department. Salt River Project also has mitigation lands at this location (the Stillinger Preserve, the Aravaipa Inflow, and the Adobe Parcel) which are managed by TNC.</p> <p>Cook’s Lake/Cienega Seep/Adobe Preserve: Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and Salt River Project own mitigation land for southwestern willow flycatcher totaling approximately 320 acres. ASARCO mining company owns parcels to the north and south comprising about 160 acres of river land.</p> <p>Dudleyville Crossing and San Pedro River Preserve: Is a well-developed cottonwood/willow gallery forest with a mature tamarisk understory. The properties extend from the Dudleyville Crossing north and total about 1,300 acres. The land at Dudleyville Crossing is privately owned with a conservation easement held by BLM. An eminent domain of the road R.O.W. is held by Pinal County. The San Pedro Preserve is a former fish farm with two ponds now being managed for marshbird habitat and refugia populations of native fish. The majority of the property outside of the riparian cottonwood and willow corridor is retired agricultural fields.</p>
Human Population Density	Rural
Legislative District(s)	Arizona Congressional Districts 2 and 6 and State Legislative Districts 7, 17 and 19
NRCS Major Land Resource Area	40: Sonoran Basin and Range 41: Southeastern Arizona Basin and Range
Visitation, main access, and permits needed	While this IBA holds a great deal of private property, public access is available at 7B Ranch, which is located east of the town of Mammoth and has a recently developed walking trail at Copper Canyon Road, The Schwennesen family has dedicated Liz’s Grove just north of the Dudleyville crossing as a riparian preserve accessible to walkers and horse riders. Access to the Arizona Game and Fish San Pedro River Wildlife Area is pending.

*References available written narratives (located on the [SJV website](#)) for general habitat types occurring within the IBA.

**Identifies whether the IBA or portions of the IBA have a special land management designation such as: wilderness, primitive area, wildlife area, refuge, park, monument, designated conservation area, conservation easement, or other similar designation

IBA Activities:

Issue or Activity	Priority	Description	Actions
Bird Monitoring	M	Dudleyville CBC	Continue
Bird Monitoring	H	Cascabel BBS	Continue-use data for Bell's vireo updates
Bird Monitoring	M	9 km Arizona IBA transects	use data for Bell's vireo updates and long-term riparian bird monitoring
Monitoring	H	Motus Station	Planned for 2025
Southwest willow flycatcher and western yellow-billed cuckoo surveys	H	AGFD and others conduct annual surveys using USFWS protocols	Support continuation and use data to update IBA species data
Wildlife and Nature Festival	L	One day festival with local vendors	Began in 2013 and was converted to a community event in Winkelman. Discussion to re-start with Oracle as the base community. No Action
IBA Signage	Semi-complete	Small IBA signs with cuckoo artwork	Interpretive signage installed at 7B Ranch nature trail. Distribute signs to landowners
IBA Dedication	Semi-complete	A formal recognition event	Small event at Liz's Grove Plan another at AGFD San Pedro Wildlife Area

Partners:

Name	Role(s)	Contact Information	Actions
Arizona Game and Fish Department	Land Owner and Manager	Tucson Regional Office	Support development of public access and information for the San Pedro River Wildlife Area. Support avian survey data collection.
Bureau of Land Management	Land Owner and Dudleyville conservation easement	Safford Field Office	Future manager of 7B Ranch

Name	Role(s)	Contact Information	Actions
Bureau of Reclamation	Land Owner and conservation easements	Phoenix Area Office	San Pedro Preserve land owner - needs a new steward (TNC not renewing contract and is returning management responsibilities to the BOR) 3Links Farm conservation easement Cook's Lake land owner
Salt River Project	Land Owner	Environmental Stewardship	Adobe/PZ Ranch Spirit Hollow Black Farm (on Aravaipa Creek)
The Nature Conservancy	Land manager and conservation easements	TNC Arizona	H&E Farm 3 Links Farm Conservation Easements 7B Ranch and Black Farm manager
Resolution Copper Company	Land Owner	http://resolutioncopper.com/	7B Ranch – public access nature trail
ASARCO	Land Owner	Contact Information	Scattered lands from Mammoth to Gila River confluence-water wells for Hayden smelter operation
BHP-Billiton	Land Owner	8950 N Oracle Rd, Tucson, AZ 85704 (520) 531-6922	Lands around San Manuel and about 8 miles of riparian corridor. Contracting for cuckoo and flycatcher surveys with AGFD
Tucson Audubon Society	IBA Steward	www.tucsonaudubon.org/	Bird surveys
Audubon Arizona	IBA Steward	http://az.audubon.org/	Bird Surveys, Public Outreach
Lower San Pedro Watershed Alliance	Watershed and IBA Steward	http://www.lowersanpedro.org/ PO BOX 576 Mammoth, AZ 85618	Convenes property owners and partners with a focus on conservation and protection of the watershed

Conservation Targets:

These are species, communities, or ecological systems that represent and encompass the full array of biodiversity found in this IBA.

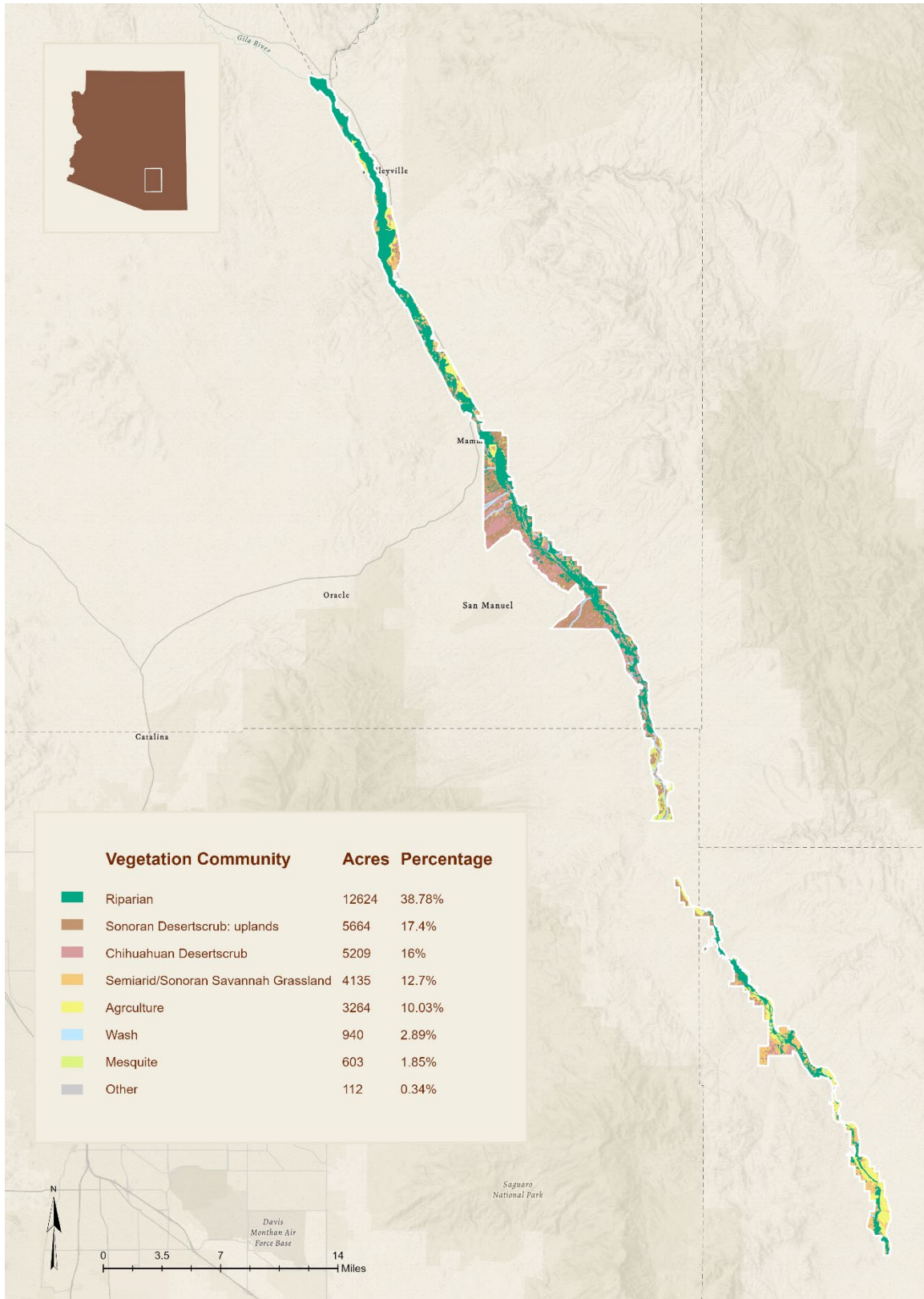
Conservation Target	Current Condition
Cottonwood/Willow Riparian Birds	Good
Mesquite Bosque Birds	Very Good
Sonoran Desert Uplands/Desert Grasslands Birds	Very Good

Conservation Challenges:

Conservation challenges are primarily human activities that immediately affect what we are trying to conserve. Through a Miradi process, groundwater pumping, wild fire, off-highway vehicle use and residential development pose the greatest threats to birds within this IBA.

Challenges	Mesquite Bosque Birds	Sonoran Desert Uplands and Desert Grassland Birds	Cottonwood/Willow Riparian Birds	Summary Rating
Groundwater Pumping	High		High	Medium
Wild Fire	High		Medium	Medium
Off Highway Vehicle	Medium	High	Medium	Medium
Over Grazing		Medium	Low	Low
Development of Houses		High	High	High
Invasive Species - Tamarisk and Bullfrogs			Low	Low

21) Lower San Pedro River			Severity (1-3)	Scope (1-3)	Permanence (2-4)
Threats on National Database					
Agricultural Intensification	Irrigation	7	2	2	3
Burning of Vegetation	Arson, Fire	8	3	2	3
Forest Grazing	Over-browsing Riparian	5	1	3	1
Industrialization/Urbanization	Development	8	2	2	4
Invasive Species	Tamarisk, Bullfrogs	6	1	2	3
Natural events	Flood, Drought	4	1	2	1
Recreation/Tourisim	Off-road Vehicles	5	1	2	2



**Lower San Pedro River
Important Bird Area**

